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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3483  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2871  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0683  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0001  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 0093  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0166  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0078  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1153  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1783

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KUALA LUMPUR 000942

SIPDIS

FOR EAP/MTS AND INR, USUN, DRL-MLGA, IO-RHS, AND IO-UNP FOR  
ANDREW MORRISON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/19/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAL](#) [IR](#) [IS](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: MALAYSIA: MFA SHARES VIEWS ON ITS UN POSITIONS

REF: A. STATE 116267 -- UNGA COUNTRY SPECIFIC HUMAN  
RIGHTS RESOLUTIONS

[1](#)B. STATE 118799 -- OPPOSING UNGA RESOLUTIONS WITH  
ANTI-ISRAEL BIAS

Classified By: Political Counselor Brian D. McFeeters for reasons 1.4 b  
and d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary and Comment. Poloff met with Principal  
Assistant Secretary Jamal Sharifuddin Johan, Assistant  
Secretary Mohd Adlyn Mughni Shamsudin, and Assistant  
Secretary Nik Ady of the MFA's Multilateral Political  
Division on November 18 to discuss Malaysia's general voting  
practices in the UN, and upcoming votes pertaining to Iran,  
North Korea, Burma (ref A), and Israel (ref B). During the  
collegial and open discussion, the three MFA officers  
emphasized that it is GOM policy to not support any  
resolution that targets a particular country, stressing that  
other forums are better venues to address these issues. The  
GOM differentiated the anti-Israel resolutions from the  
others because the problem is a "regional issue", noting that  
even if the resolutions are controversial they are still  
discussed and enacted in a legally-binding framework, and  
that Israel (and implicitly the U.S.) needs to recognize  
this. The GOM will continue to support anti-Israel  
resolutions until Israel makes unilateral concessions first,  
starting with ceasing all additional settlements.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: Although the results of our discussion were  
not unexpected, the MFA officials were far more conducive to  
listening and evaluating U.S. positions than in the past, and  
showed appreciation for our willingness to hear their views  
despite knowing that their final position would be counter to  
ours. One official commented at the conclusion of the  
meeting that he welcomed further interactions with us like  
this, a small but positive sign. End Summary and Comment.

A HISTORY OF VOTING THE OTHER WAY  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) Poloff met with the MFA's senior and junior officers  
(US office director and desk officer equivalents) for UN  
Policy and Planning, Principal Assistant Secretary Jamal  
Sharifuddin Johan and Assistant Secretary Nik Ady; and with  
their sole officer responsible for covering the Middle East  
peace process, Assistant Secretary Mohd Adlyn Mughni  
Shamsudin, on November 18. Poloff began the meeting by  
asking about Malaysia's voting record during the 62nd UN  
General Assembly, noting that from 2007-2008 Malaysia voted

with the United States 13 out of 88 times, including just once out of thirteen votes on important issues, and never regarding any votes pertaining to the Middle East. None of the three officers were surprised at the low numbers. Jamal told Poloff that the MFA regularly consults with its counterparts from OIC and NAM countries ahead of UN votes, but that the MFA normally does not consult with U.S. officials unless we reach out to them first.

DEFAULT POSITION: HUMAN RIGHTS ARE AN INTERNAL MATTER

14. (C) Poloff raised the upcoming UN human rights resolutions condemning government activities in Iran, Burma, and the DPRK. (Note: The GOM has a long and consistent history of voting "yes" on No-Action motions against Iran and Burma, and "no" when a resolution is proposed to condemn the human rights practices in all three countries. End Note.) Jamal stated that Malaysia holds a firm policy not to support any UN resolutions that target one specific country. All three stressed that abstaining from a vote was an unacceptable compromise, because the abstention has almost the same effect on the outcome as voting "no".

15. (C) Jamal explained that Malaysia believes that human rights are a country's internal matter, and that no matter how terrible the governing regime is the GOM will not support any UN measure that interferes in a country's internal affairs. Nik affirmed that human rights "with the DPRK, Iran, and Burma are all internal issues." Jamal, who previously held an overseas assignment in Pyongyang with his

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embassy, opined "the system in the DPRK is pretty bad, but we don't criticize their type of government because they are a sovereign state." This is not to say that Malaysia does not engage these countries on human rights issues -- Jamal said that his government believes that direct, bilateral engagement on human rights is "far more constructive and cooperative" than criticizing a country in an international forum, as "the situation of human rights will not improve" this way. Nik added that the GOM also doesn't believe the UN General Assembly is the right forum within the UN to introduce human rights resolutions, as "there are other channels, such as the UN Human Rights Council" to raise them.

IS ISRAEL AN EXCEPTION? YES

16. (C) Poloff turned to a discussion about Israel by asking why the MFA takes such a firm position regarding resolutions targeted towards North Korea, Iran, and Burma, but does not do the same with Israel. Adlyn replied that "the issue has been on the table for 50-60 years. To us, these do not constitute resolutions against one country; to us, it's a regional issue." Jamal claimed that earlier this year he and other GOM officials approached Israeli representatives at the UN during the Universal Periodic Review to try to engage Israel about breaking the stalemate (Note: he did not specify how. End note). The results were futile, Jamal said, because "they refused to accept any of our comments."

17. (C) Poloff and the MFA officers engaged in a detailed discussion about the Israeli-Palestinian situation as Poloff explained ref B talking points. Poloff stressed that the continuous, one-sided UN resolutions condemning Israel have not achieved any tangible progress, but were successful in creating an atmosphere of resentment among the Israelis. Adlyn replied that Malaysia keeps approving the same resolutions year after year because "the resolutions have not been fully implemented." Adlyn explained that regardless of how one-sided and controversial the resolutions are, "nevertheless this is what has been endorsed by the international community in a legal framework." Regardless of whether the U.S. agrees with the resolutions or not, said Adlyn, the GOM believes that Israel is legally bound by the

resolutions previously passed in the UN, yet continues to fail to meet its obligations under the UN.

GOM CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS ON MOVING FORWARD  
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18. (C) Adlyn downplayed how any anti-Israel resolutions might undermine efforts to bring the parties back to the table, because "face it, the timeline of the roadmap has elapsed." Adlyn said in the company of his colleagues that the GOM supported the efforts of the quartet, and that "we hope the quartet can still do something." Privately, however, Adlyn noted to Poloff that the quartet is not currently effective as an entity, and that he believes that the best hope to move things forward rests with the United States alone.

19. (C) Adlyn made it clear that "Malaysia won't change its position unless Israel gives concessions on its side." Poloff emphasized the importance for negotiations to resume without preconditions. Adlyn noted that we appeared hypocritical in our position, as the U.S. has set preconditions on Hamas before we would engage them. Poloff explained that this particular precondition was to drop the "destruction of Israel" from its charter, as the two sides could never engage in a meaningful dialogue while one side called for the annihilation of the other. Adlyn and the others nodded in understanding, but said it would be "very helpful if Israel made a gesture first", specifying the halting of the construction of additional settlements.

110. (C) Poloff shared White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs' statement from November 17, which condemned Israel's recent decision to expand construction in Arab East Jerusalem, and reaffirming our commitment to bring both sides back to the negotiating table. All three expressed thanks to the U.S. for the statement, but added that the U.S. could do more. When Poloff asked how, they replied that the U.S.

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could cut off our military aid to Israel. Adlyn opined that "one of the reasons for the stalemate is that Israel does what it wants and aid (from the U.S. and Europe) continues unabated." He compared this to the Palestinians, who promptly had their aid cut off when Hamas won the political elections in 2006. Adlyn said that many countries see this as "an imbalance", and that "the Palestinians have been strangled" while Israel continues to prosper.  
KEITH